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Summary record of the 40th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 12 May 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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08-33519 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 150: Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (A/62/631, A/62/720 and A/62/781/Add.6)

Agenda item 153: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (A/62/562; A/62/719 and Corr.1; A/62/781/Add.7)

Agenda item 156: Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (A/62/611, A/62/679, A/62/781/Add.3 and A/62/817)

1. **Mr. Karia** (Peacekeeping Financing Division), speaking as Officer-in-Charge of the Peacekeeping Financing Division and introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/631), said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/18 B, had appropriated funding of $489,207,100 and that expenditure had been $484,020,100, leaving an unencumbered balance of $5,187,000, representing an implementation rate of 98.9 per cent.

2. The main causes of the variance were the delayed deployment of some military contingents and the reduction in the authorized military strength of the Mission pursuant to Security Council resolution 1702 (2006), as well as reduced expenditure on air transportation, primarily resulting from delayed procurement of firefighting and meteorological services. The General Assembly was invited to decide how to treat the unencumbered balance of $5,187,000, as well as other income and adjustments amounting to $34,594,200.

3. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/720), which represented a proposed total of $575,103,200, he said that the sum concerned was $39,730,400, or 7.4 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2007/08 by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/284.

4. The main causes of the variance were greater expenditure on military contingents, primarily attributable to the payment of mission subsistence allowance to staff officers, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/276, the proposed deployment of 16 contingent-owned vessels for coastal patrols, and greater expenditure on United Nations police, attributable to an increase in mission subsistence allowance rates and the application of a delayed deployment factor of 3 per cent for 2008/09, as compared to a factor of 15 per cent in 2007/08. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate $575,103,200 to maintain the Mission from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009; to assess the amount of $167,738,433 for the period from 1 July 2008 to 15 October 2008, and to assess the amount of $407,364,767 at a monthly rate of $47,925,267 for the period from 16 October 2008 to 30 June 2009 should the Security Council decide to continue the Mission's mandate.

5. Introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/562), he said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/277, had appropriated funding of $39,865,200 and that expenditure had been $39,549,000, leaving an unencumbered balance of $316,200, representing an implementation rate of 99.2 per cent.

6. The main cause of the variance was that actual requirements for the settlement of death and disability claims and for reimbursements for contingent-owned equipment had been lower than originally predicted. The General Assembly was invited to decide how to treat the unencumbered balance of $316,200, as well as other income and adjustments amounting to $2,412,500.

7. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/719 and Corr.1), which represented a proposed total of $45,726,000, he said that the sum concerned was $6,063,500, or 15.3 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2007/08 by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/287.

8. The main causes of the variance were greater expenditure on military contingents, primarily attributable to the payment of mission subsistence allowance to staff officers, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/276, and additional facilities and infrastructure costs arising from the construction of security walls, gates, barriers and storage facilities. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate

$45,726,000 to maintain the Force from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009; to assess the amount of $3,810,500 for the period from 1 to 31 July 2008, and to assess the amount of $41,915,500 at a monthly rate of $3,810,500 should the Security Council decide to continue the Force's mandate.

9. Introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/62/611), he said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/280, had appropriated funding of $42,619,400 and that expenditure had been $41,702,600, leaving an unencumbered balance of $916,800, representing an implementation rate of 97.8 per cent.

10. The main causes of the variance were delayed recruitment of international staff, leading to a vacancy rate of 12.3 per cent in place of the rate of 5 per cent applied in the budget, and therefore to lower costs for that category of staff; and reduced expenditure on air transportation resulting from fixed-wing aircraft being used for fewer than the number of hours originally planned because heavy rainfall had forced the closure of four airfields. The General Assembly was invited to decide how to treat the unencumbered balance of $916,800, as well as other income and adjustments amounting to $1,986,900.

11. Introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the financing arrangements for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/62/817), he said that additional requirements had arisen for the maintenance of the mission during that period. Totalling $1,754,200, they represented an increase of 4 per cent over the budget of $44,321,600 approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/290.

12. The main causes of the variance were greater expenditure on air transportation resulting from the deployment under new contracts of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft and greater than expected expenditure on locally provided services and on the rotation of the Mission's military observers due to the depreciation of the United States dollar against the Moroccan dirham. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate and assess $1,754,200 for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 over and above the $44,321,600 already appropriated for the same period pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/290.

13. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/679), which represented a proposed total of $45,728,400, he said that the sum concerned was $1,406,800, or 3.2 per cent, higher than the resources approved for 2007/08 by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/290.

14. The main causes of the variance were greater expenditure on air transport caused by the increased cost per flight hour resulting from a new contract for fixed-wing aircraft, and additional expenditure on other supplies, services and equipment because an operational mine-action programme had been established in the Mission. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate $45,728,400 to maintain the Mission from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009; and to assess that amount at a monthly rate of $3,810,700 should the Security Council decide to continue the Mission's mandate.

15. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (A/62/781/Add.6), said that the increased resources in the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 should be considered in the context of the most recent Security Council resolutions on the Mission, which had expanded its mandate to include, inter alia, patrols along the maritime and land borders in support of Haitian National Police border security efforts.

16. Annex II to the Advisory Committee's report listed expenditure directly related to the expanded mandate, including the cost of deploying 16 contingent-owned marine vessels and the related freight and fuel costs, estimated at $5.5 million; increased air transportation costs due to a change in the aircraft used, estimated at $4.4 million; and expenditure on 24 additional general temporary assistance positions for border control support, estimated at $0.5 million. The remaining additional resources were being requested to meet increased costs

for the support of the military and police component and the civilian staffing component.

17. With respect to the civilian staffing component, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of 13 of the 14 proposed new posts but recommended against the proposed establishment of a P-3 post of Information/Reporting Officer, believing that those functions could be carried out from within existing resources or by a member of the United Nations country team. The Advisory Committee also concurred with the request for 52 general temporary assistance positions for integrated support services. It expected the temporary nature of the positions to be respected and therefore for them to be terminated when the period covered by the 2008/09 budget drew to a close. Any new requirements should be fully justified in future budget proposals.

18. She also drew attention to the Advisory Committee's additional observations on the Mission's efforts to improve inventory management, on the monitoring of acquisitions and the consumption of fuel, on the transition from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to community violence reduction and on the disaster recovery and business continuity centre located within the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

19. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (A/62/781/Add.7), she said that the Advisory Committee had noted that the projected 6.6 per cent overexpenditure for the current period and the 15.3 per cent increase in resources requested for the maintenance of the Force in 2008/09 as compared to 2007/08 had been caused by higher costs, the appreciation of the Syrian pound against the United States dollar, revised salary scales for national staff, the payment of mission subsistence allowance to staff officers and one-time expenditure related to the volatile security situation in the region.

20. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposed establishment of a P-5 post of Chief of Integrated Support Services, currently filled by a military staff officer on rotation, as well as approval of the conversion of a temporary P-3 position of cartographer and a temporary national General Service administrative assistant for the Geographic Information System mapping project. It also made observations on the efforts of the Force to reduce vehicle accidents, coordinate its training programmes with those of other missions in the region, apply proper procedures for the storage and management of its rations and improve procurement practices.

21. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financial performance report for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (A/62/781/Add.3), she said that the Advisory Committee had not included in that report recommendations regarding the request for an additional appropriation and assessment for the current period, on an exceptional basis, contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the financing arrangements for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/62/817), having received that note after completing its consideration of the Mission's administrative and budgetary affairs.

22. Noting that the projected additional requirements for 2007/08 would be offset by a projected unutilized balance of $2,116,300 resulting mainly from a higher than expected vacancy rate for international staff, the Advisory Committee found that, in the light of the Mission's chronically precarious financial situation, it had no choice but to concur with the request of the Secretary-General. However, it took the view that the reasons offered for the increased requirements were clear evidence of a lack of sound budget planning and management rather than of exceptional circumstances.

23. While the performance report for 2006/07 indicated a budget implementation rate of 97.8 per cent, the Advisory Committee noted significant variances between approved and actual expenditure. While it recommended acceptance of the proposed budget for 2008/09, which was essentially a maintenance budget, it also recommended a minor reduction in resources for training to be conducted by consultants.

24. Lastly, the Advisory Committee deeply regretted the damage caused to the Lajuad archaeological sites, allegedly by the Mission's military or police personnel. As the actions of a few had a wide adverse impact not only on the Mission but on the United Nations, the

Advisory Committee trusted that appropriate action would be taken against those found responsible once the investigation had been completed. It was pleased at the involvement of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the agency responsible for the protection and restoration of such sites, and hoped that that involvement would continue.

25. **Mr. Poulin** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand on agenda item 150, said that, while the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) had made progress in key areas, the recent unrest caused by the food prices crisis clearly illustrated the precariousness of the situation on the ground and the need for a robust United Nations presence in the area. Given that MINUSTAH personnel had been the target of violence, even resulting in death, increased confidence-building measures were needed to ensure that the benefits of the Mission's presence were fully appreciated by the population. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the appointment of Mr. Hédi Annabi as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and trusted that he would continue to strengthen the integration of the Mission with the United Nations Country Team and use his good offices in support of the activities of the United Nations funds and programmes.

26. The three delegations commended the Secretary-General for his prudent and accurate budget proposals for the preceding periods, which should serve as an example for other peacekeeping operations, and welcomed the fact that the Mission's remaining cash balance as at 31 March 2007 had been sufficient. Nevertheless, Member States must continue to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions, to ensure that troop-contributing countries were promptly reimbursed. While endorsing the proposed budget for MINUSTAH for 2008/09 and most of the Advisory Committee conclusions and recommendations the delegations would like further information on the time frame for the deployment of the much-needed patrol vessels.

27. Australia, Canada and New Zealand fully supported the reformulation of the Mission's mandate to focus on a community violence reduction programme rather than on traditional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategies and the coordination of the programme's execution with the United Nations Development Programme. Integrated programmes yielded better results and led to increased savings.

28. The abnormally high vacancy rate among national staff undermined the Mission's ability to comply with the training component of its mandate, which was essential to ensure a successful transition to the peacebuilding stage. Every effort must be made to find innovative solutions to the problem and to fill the vacant posts with qualified Haitian candidates.

29. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group on agenda item 150, said that the Group, in its declaration in support of democratic institutions in Haiti, adopted on 14 April 2008, had reaffirmed its backing for restoring democratic institutions, promoting social development and combating poverty in Haiti, and also its confidence that Haiti would continue to advance peacefully towards consolidating political and social stability, creating the basis for economic progress. Likewise, the Group supported the international community's efforts to encourage sustainable development contributing to a climate of security and to overcoming poverty, without resorting to coercive action. The Mission must receive the resources it required to be able to assist in improving civilian and security institutions, promoting good governance, fostering economic development and strengthening coordination among the agencies of the United Nations system, particularly during the current food crisis.

30. The Group welcomed the strategic framework which the Mission had established together with the Government of Haiti and others, in order to connect security and development more closely by reorienting the former traditional focus on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration towards a focus on community violence reduction. Recalling the renewed mandate conferred on the Mission by Security Council resolution 1780 (2007), the Group welcomed the development efforts of the Mission and the reconfiguration of its military and police personnel to take account of the changing internal situation of the country. Also positive were the regional and bilateral initiatives aimed at strengthening the security and welfare of the Haitian people, including the establishment of a Humanitarian Fund to provide assistance and carry out priority social programmes.

31. The Group agreed with the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his most recent report on the

United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2008/202) that the assistance provided by the Mission's military and police personnel was essential in helping the Haitian National Police to strengthen security along the country's land and sea borders — a task which would require more specialized equipment — and in helping the Government to implement judicial reform and strengthen institutions and the rule of law.

32. The Group was concerned at the imbalance in the Mission between the number of peacekeeping personnel from Latin America and the Caribbean (approximately 60 per cent) and the number of professional international civilian staff from the same region (approximately 6 per cent). It was also concerned that quick-impact projects, which it strongly supported, were destined to suffer a 40-per-cent reduction in resources in the proposed budget for 2008/09. That was alarming in the light of the Security Council mandate for such projects and of the Secretary-General's recognition that they had direct benefits in terms of maintaining the population's trust in the Mission.

33. The Group acknowledged the important role of the 2x9 mechanism of Latin American troop-contributing countries, which enabled those countries to plan their strategies for cooperation with Haiti, avoiding duplication and optimizing the use of resources on the ground. It also stressed the role played in the Mission's work by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

34. **Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura** (Brazil), speaking on agenda item 150, said that the recent protests over the rising cost of food in Haiti illustrated that, despite the progress made since 2004, the situation on the ground remained fragile. It was vital that the international community increase its support for and cooperation with Haiti, so that the country could embark on the path of stability, reconstruction and development. Accordingly, the resources provided to MINUSTAH must be commensurate with its mandate and enable it to respond rapidly to changing circumstances.

35. By its resolution 1780 (2007), the Security Council had further expanded the Mission's mandate to include improvement of border security and had requested MINUSTAH to continue to implement quick-impact projects. His delegation therefore noted with concern that the cost estimates for quick-impact projects for the period 2008/09 had decreased by 40 per cent in comparison with the preceding period. In light of the recent tragic events in Haiti and given the specific provisions of the aforementioned resolution, Brazil favoured a significant increase in the budgetary resources earmarked for such projects in the proposed budget for 2008/09.

36. The Mission's efforts to focus on a comprehensive community violence reduction programme, tailored to conditions on the ground, rather than on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration were welcome, and his delegation therefore endorsed the proposed resource requirements relating to that programme. As the estimated unencumbered balance for 2007/08 amounted to only $4,400, it was clear that any reduction in the proposed resource requirements for the forthcoming period might have an adverse effect on mandate implementation. Bearing in mind the recent expansion of the Mission's mandate, his delegation would carefully consider the reductions proposed by the Advisory Committee.

37. Peacekeeping budgets should reflect the three pillars of the Organization's work, namely peace and security, development and human rights. Unfortunately, however, the development pillar was not receiving the attention it deserved. Peace could be achieved only by dealing simultaneously with national reconciliation, security and development with social justice. There could be no simple military solution to present-day crises.

38. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina), speaking on agenda item 150, endorsed the remarks made by the representative of Brazil and stressed that the General Assembly must provide MINUSTAH with the resources necessary to implement its mandate. In that connection, he welcomed the projected high budget implementation rate for 2007/08, which illustrated that the budget for that period had been realistic and tailored to the situation on the ground.

39. By its resolution 1780 (2007), the Security Council had reformulated the Mission's mandate to focus on providing support for Government-led border management initiatives and institution-building. The General Assembly should approve the related resource requests. In particular, his delegation was in favour of establishing all the posts requested in the proposed budget, including the reclassification from P-5 to D-1 of a post in the Office of the Deputy Special

Representative of the Secretary-General and the redeployment of a P-5 post to the Office of the Principal Deputy Special Representative.

40. With regard to air operations, it would be useful to know more about the Mission's action to improve firefighting capacity and to ensure the availability of appropriate meteorological information. Quick-impact projects had proven their effectiveness on the ground and had helped MINUSTAH consolidate its presence in the region. It was therefore troubling to note that the resources requested for such projects for the forthcoming period had decreased significantly.

41. The United Nations must discuss responsibly how peacekeeping operations could continue to function in unforeseen circumstances which threatened stability or undermined progress already made. In that connection, MINUSTAH should play a more active role in efforts to resolve the crisis caused by rising food prices in Haiti.

42. His delegation wished to recognize the input of the coordination forums for donors and troop-contributing countries, which were providing strategy guidance and support for Haitian Government efforts to achieve sustainable development, stability and political dialogue. The 2x9 mechanism, which brought together the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Latin American troop-contributing countries, had added particular value to those endeavours and illustrated the commitment of those countries to security and development in Haiti.

43. **Mr. Quezada** (Chile), speaking on agenda item 150, endorsed the remarks made by the previous speakers and reaffirmed his delegation's support for democratic institutionalization in Haiti and its agreement with the proposed MINUSTAH budget for 2008/09. However, Latin American and Caribbean countries, which had contributed 57.5 per cent of the military personnel deployed to Haiti, were significantly underrepresented among international civilian personnel, only 6 per cent of whom were nationals of those States. That serious imbalance must be rectified and steps should also be taken to achieve an appropriate gender balance among the Mission's staff.

44. Quick-impact projects were of direct benefit to the local population and served as an important confidence-building measure. His delegation was therefore concerned about the significant drop in the resources allocated to such projects, particularly since the Secretary-General's report did not provide any substantive justification for the reduction and given that relevant Security Council resolutions dating from 2006 and 2007 had called for their implementation.

45. Lastly, while he welcomed the reformulation of the Mission's mandate pursuant to Security Council resolution 1780 (2007), he pointed out that rising food prices had had a significant impact on the situation on the ground. Recent events in Haiti should lead the international community to reflect further on that issue.

46. **Mr. Sadouk** (Morocco), speaking on agenda item 156, expressed surprise that the Secretary-General's reports on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) made no mention of the acts of vandalism at the Lajuad archaeological sites and endorsed the remarks made in that connection by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, should take the measures necessary to prevent the recurrence of such acts.

47. **Mr. Déjoie** (Haiti), speaking on agenda item 150, paid tribute to the Nigerian peacekeeper who had been killed on 12 April 2008. It was to be hoped that his ultimate sacrifice would galvanize the international community and MINUSTAH and serve as a reminder that much remained to be done to strengthen democracy, security, development and universal justice in Haiti.

48. His delegation thanked the international community for its considerable assistance. However, the events of 7 and 8 April 2008 had illustrated the precariousness of the situation on the ground. While MINUSTAH was a peacekeeping operation and not a development agency, there could be no peace without development. The Mission should therefore pursue its cooperation with the various development stakeholders in the field, listen more attentively to the needs of the local population and ensure improved coordination with other agencies.

49. The Mission must be provided with the resources it needed to implement its expanded mandate successfully. The 40-per-cent drop in the proposed resource requirements for quick-impact projects was therefore cause for concern. Adequate funding for such projects was vital to achieve better integration of the Mission in its new deployment areas.

50. Lastly, with regard to the recruitment of national staff, the unusually high vacancy rates reported by the Secretary-General in successive years were troubling. The Mission should step up its efforts to issue vacancy announcements and make use of all available resources on the ground, because there were qualified Haitians who would be willing to take up employment with the Mission if the conditions and salaries were satisfactory. In that connection, it might be desirable to review the recruitment requirements.

Other matters

51. **Ms. Samayoa-Recari** (Guatemala) enquired as to the progress made by the Advisory Committee in its consideration of the report of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.